JOHN ALVEY TURNER'S MUSICAL MONTHLY

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Vol. V. No. 9. SEPTEMBER 1929. PRICE SIXPENCE.

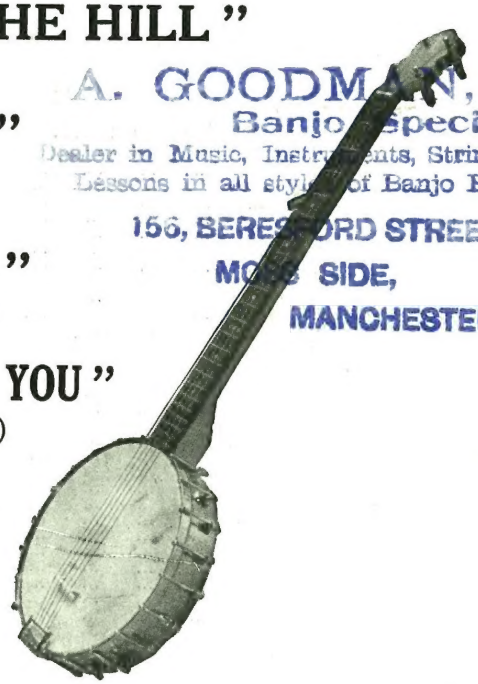
MUSIC IN THIS ISSUE

"THE HOLLOW OF THE HILL"
Tenor Banjo Solo

"GAVOTTE"
(*J. S. Bach*)
Guitar Solo

"MY IDEAL"
Plectrum Banjo Solo

"HUGGABLE KISSABLE YOU"
Banjo Solo (Finger Style)



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A DATE to Remember

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See Page 134 for Particulars.

BROADCASTING DATE.

Ernest Jones will broadcast from 5 G.B. on September 28.

A VIOLIN AND BANJO ARGUMENT, ETC.

During a Dance Band interval.

Banjo (to violin). Well, comrade!

Violin. Are you addressing me? Pray remember that I'm a violin, you are only a banjo.

B. I don't dispute it, but I play just as important a part as you in this band.

V. Absurd! Do you know that Gladstone said there has been as much study in my construction as in that of the steam engine.

B. True, the banjo has received but scant attention, and yet I am a necessity, without me a band lacks swing, in fact, we can dispense with a violin, as some dance bands do, but the banjo must be there—you are a luxury—an ornament.

V. What good are you without your plectrum?

B. More good than you without your bow.

V. You use wire strings.

B. Don't forget yourself, your first is mostly a wire; such vi(o)linsinuations—

V. Don't fret yourself.

B. And don't you go off your nut or you will find your finger bo(a)rd.

V. And don't you be so snappish.

B. Try to be more c(h)ordial.

V. Talk logical harmony.

B. Allow me to suggest that you should be mut(e)ual—you ought to know that as a second violin you are a miserable failure in a dance band, too weak; that's where I come in. Moreover, your chord effects on four notes are in spasmodic jerks; look at me, I can give you a sustained chord of four notes, com. chord or a dim. seventh—that's logical harmony.

V. Bah! Thumper!

B. Bah! Squaker!

Fortunately, the refreshed players return and put an end to what might become a tragedy.

ALFD. BANNER.

Notes for the Guitar—The Instrument.

THE writer feels very gratified by the prompt response to his modest call for more guitar music, from such a well-known musician as Mr. Jimmie Edwards, and wishes to assure him that he did not mean, in any way, to be unfair to English composers, but rather wished to express his firm belief in their talent and genial faculties and incomparable power of expression.

His object in writing these notes is to try and make the guitar, its music, and leading exponents, better known to the public, and to induce the highbrows—an arduous task, it is admitted—to grant " the freedom of the musical city " to an instrument that fears no comparison in the interpretation of musical conception. He would state further that he is not guided by any financial interest whatever, being an absolutely free-lance, nor addicted to blowing anybody's trumpet, his sole interest in the matter being the furthering of the study of the guitar in this country, confident that it can produce excellent craftsmen to supply the necessary tools, and music, and players second to none.

But, as Spain is the birth-place of the modern guitar, the country in which it was taken up seriously by makers, composers and players alike, and brought to the high level of efficiency it has reached to-day, we, naturally go to Spain for examples of her national instrument, not for servile imitation, but for study and inspiration.

The man who made possible the great advance in the technique of the modern guitar, and prepared for it new and untold possibilities in the development of its music, is Antonio Torres, the *Stradivarius* of the guitar. A highly gifted luthier in love with his craft, he realised that the traditional instrument, as he found it, was far from having reached its perfect state to enjoy complete fruition. It still lacked power and voice, and did not yield yet that full and mellow tone that he could hear in his inner self. Therefore, he set to study and work at this " miniature orchestra," as Berlioz called the guitar. He altered its shape to a certain extent, its dimensions, introduced innovations and changes in its structure, and went as far as to fit some of his guitars with a resonator, amplifying thus the tone of the bass strings ; he simplified considerably its ornamentation, and, after years of patient and constant research, he evolved an instrument with much enhanced and more sympathetic tone, greater volume of sound, combined with beauty in form, and strength in construction. In short, with Torres, the guitar attained ideal perfection, and his instruments—which fetched fancy prices, after his death in the last quarter of the nineteenth century—became, and are still, the standard, the definite, perfect models of every craftsman worthy of the name.

Torres had a brilliant galaxy of successors, but the finest maker in Spain to-day is, undoubtedly, Francisco Simplicio. His workmanship leaves nothing to be desired ; in vain would you seek, in his instruments, the slightest flaw, even in the smallest details ; nut, bridge, fingerboard and spliced joints in the neck and shoulder, or in the head-piece, everything is most minutely and conscientiously worked to a perfect finish. The bridge is a model of strength, adaptability and elegance, and the fretting is a real beauty of precision and mathematical accuracy, a feast for the eye, and a delight to the touch ; it is so cunningly wrought and smoothly made that the fingers can run over the fret, even on the bare board, without meeting any awkward obstacle to stop them. Great and small barrés—perhaps the severest test of touch—can be made with ease on any position, each note being brought out distinctly. Every part of the instrument is made of picked material ; the ornaments, all done by hand, are artistic, not gaudy ; the sound-board, which is perfectly flat—the back being raised—and made of beautifully fine-grained pine, shines like a mirror. The comparative heaviness of the handle seems to suggest that it may contain some special contrivance to guard against any possible chance of warping with age. But the weight may be due to the nature of the wood, which is hard, heavy Cuba Cedar. The back and ribs are made with a special kind of fine old British India mahogany, with a delightful velvety glow. The rods in the machine-head, instead of holes, have handy little knobs on which the strings are slipped, and then fastened by winding in the ordinary way. This ingenious arrangement saves time, and lessens the breakage of strings. Finally, inside the body of the guitar, from the sound-hole down to an inch or so from the bottom, a metal tube acts as resonator.

So far we have only dealt with the material side of the instrument ; the sound it produces, however, is not easily described. It is robust, and yet mellow ; the basses possess a rich, baritonal quality, while the other strings range from the human-like voice of the violoncello, to the more brilliant notes of the violin, but with a timber that approximates, at times, the quaint resonance of the harpsichord. It yields an exceedingly varied series of gradations, the strings responding to the slightest touch with considerably protracted vibrations. It is a fine instrument.

F. Simplicio, who is nothing if not active, has invented a new and very interesting model, which is being shown, with his other work, in his stand at the Barcelona exhibition, where it is causing a great deal of lively discussion and comments in the guitaristic world. Space prevents us from describing the novel feature of this exhibit, but it would be money well spent for an enterprising and capable expert to pay a visit to this great show, and to see these instruments for himself.

Anyone who hears these instruments played will no longer speak of the feeble voiced guitar, for they speak with no uncertain voice. Listen to what Senor E. Pujol says about it :—" . . . in order to hear the guitar to the best advantage, it is indispensable that one should listen to it from a distance—which may seem strange about an instrument of such an intimate nature—for the distance allows the waves to be amplified, to grow clearer, and to blend." And he gave a wonderful proof of it, himself, on his original Torres last year in the Perez Goldo's Theatre of Las Palmas, where he performed before 3,000 people, and the music was heard distinctly, and enjoyed, in every part of the hall !

On a smaller scale, any one could get a proof of the sound carrying power of the guitar in his own home, especially if he has a good instrument. Play the fine solo given in this issue—Bach's Gavotte, arranged and fingered by Andrés Segovia—in one room, while listeners are either in an adjoining room, or in a room above, with open doors. They will hear quite well, and even get the impression, at times, that you are playing on the piano.

Other proofs could be adduced to expose the fallacy of considering the guitar as an instrument of weak resonance. But the above will suffice, it is hoped, to convince the interested student the foregoing remarks may be brought to a conclusion by stating that the guitar is fitted with six strings, three of silk covered with wire,

(*Continued on page* 133, *col.* 2).

Theory of Music. Part III.—By B. W. Dykes.

Scales. A scale is a series of, or succession of notes, ascending or descending by regular but varying degrees. This will be seen by the latter part of the last lesson, showing that the degrees in both Major and Minor were regular as regards the name of the note, but they were of varying tone measurement.

We call a scale DIATONIC when the notes are in an unbroken alphabetical order.

When the seven DIATONIC notes are interspersed with *five* other notes or half-notes we call it Chromatic. These five half-tones are called "*inflections.*" I once asked a pupil the name for them, and she said "Inflictions," and the way she used them, I quite agreed, they were.

When we commence a series of notes which ascend or descend by degrees less than a half-tone or less than Chromatic, we then call it Enharmonic. Of course, this cannot be done on a fretted instrument.

Now, having seen how a scale is divided into regular distances of measurement we will endeavour to nominate these distances. They are called intervals. Now we have many kinds of intervals; some of them are: Major Intervals, Minor Intervals, Simple and Compound Intervals, Diminished and Augmented Intervals, Discordant and Concordant intervals, Perfect and Imperfect Intervals.

Now, generally speaking, intervals are reckoned by the names of the notes they contain. They are also reckoned *upwards* and inclusively. The *lowest* note is the one reckoned from. If we go from C to D this would be an interval of a major 2nd, because it comprises two letter names and comprises the distance between three half-tones, but if we went from C to D♭ this would be a Minor Second.

General rules are, if you take any key and from the TONIC note of that key reckon to the next Primary, that would be a *Perfect Interval* (Primary notes are the 1st, 4th and 5th and Upper Tonic of the key).

In the key of C Major :—C to F natural would be a perfect fourth, equals Tonic to Sub. Dom. If you go from C to G it would be a perfect fifth, equals Tonic to Dominant. From C to its Octave would be a perfect Octave. All the other intervals are Major.

1. Major Intervals made one semitone less are called Minor.

2. Perfect Intervals made one semitone less are called Diminished (therefore C to G♭ is a diminished fifth), now by altering the key signature (to C major) this would be an augmented fourth, viz., C to F♯, now go from C to F natural, and this will give you a perfect fourth.

Now you can see that the intervals that are of the same "tonal" degree distance are of different length really according to the name of the degrees employed. Therefore key signature alters intervals by name, distance, but not by sound distance.

Inversion of Intervals. Now having broadly outlined the manner in which we arrive at the length of musical tone measurement we will see what effect we can have by reversing the notes.

Example 1. If we go from C to G we have proved this to be a perfect fifth. Now put the C an octave higher, which is called an inversion of the note—G to C it will be found that we have a perfect Fourth. Therefore *Inversions of Perfect produce Perfect.*

Now take a Major interval :—viz., C to E; this is a Major third, by inverting the C we get E to C, which is a minor sixth. Therefore Inverted Major produce Minor and the number of each interval added together make 9. C to D equals Major second; by inversion, D to C equals minor seventh equals 7 and 2 are 9, and so on.

Now, if as already seen, an interval is reckoned alphabetically from one note to another it is quite feasible to suppose that as an octave note is the same note, an interval plus an octave is the same as that note would be an octave lower. C to E is a third (major) C to octave E is still a third (major). The former we call a simple interval and the latter a compound interval.

(*To be continued.*)

PLECTRUM AND TENOR BANJO MUSIC IN THIS ISSUE.

By Ernest Taylor.

THIS month's solo for plectrum banjo players, "My Ideal," is a very beautiful number, and has been arranged for playing in the chord tremolo style. Hints on this style of playing are given elsewhere in this issue, and should help the player who wishes to improve in this delightful manner of playing the banjo.

In bar 3 of the verse a slight break must be made between the two similar chords in order to separate them. In order to do this effectively and with a minimum of effort the left hand fingers should be raised for a small fraction of time just to allow the strings to come clear of the fingerboard and will make the necessary break in the tremolo.

In bars 15 and 16 of verse the chord changes must be made very neatly, and in such a manner that the effect is that of an unbroken tremolo on the melody note. This effect must also be observed in the last two bars of chorus, second time through.

The whole of this solo should be played with great expression.

Those players who wish to have a pianoforte accompaniment should purchase the published song copy, price 2/-, postage extra, obtainable from Messrs. John Alvey Turner.

"The Hollow of a Hill," arranged as a solo for tenor banjo, is a very bright new number, and is quite easy to play. It should prove to be a very good concert number for the new season.

The price of the published song copy is 6d., postage extra, and readers may obtain their copies from Keynotes House.

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Playing in Tune.—B. Sheldon Green.

AN appeal, in a London banjo journal, by a Canadian reader who is almost heartbroken at his inability to "learn Time," prompts me to pen this article.

The system I am about to explain has proved successful with pupils over a period of many years, and I have no hesitation in claiming that it is a good deal simpler than what we find in the books of Elements.

It will be seen at a glance that *the eye plays a prominent part in the system*, and that there is no guesswork.

Each note has its own proper place in the bar and in the beat, and there is no sneaking in a note, or "fitting it in."

The only sine qua non is that the student's beating with the foot shall be *regular*, like the ticking of a clock.

Now to work.

Beats of to-day are of only two kinds—crotchets or quavers, according as the lower figure in the time signature is 4 or 2 (C is simply $\frac{4}{4}$).

The ₵ time of dance music is, of course, two minims in a bar (it is really like $\frac{2}{4}$), which must be regarded as a *special* sort of time, and will present no difficulties when the elements of my system have been mastered.

When breaking in a beginner I insist on tapping with the foot, and the tap must be audible.

An audible tap sends vibration right through the body and to the brain, where is has *a definite effect.*

Beat about a dozen regular bars in this style, then suddenly alter the beat, and it will immediately come as a shock to the brain—in other words, there will be a distinct jar. The keener the ear the greater the jar.

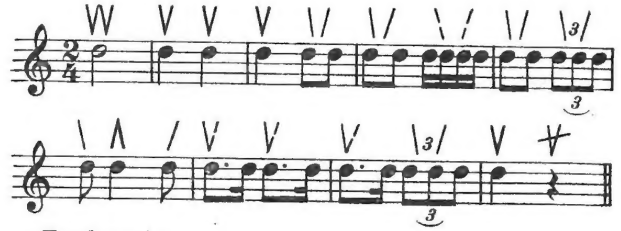
When the beginner can tap regularly I introduce a single note and get him to play it on each tap. When this is perfected I begin with my system.

Tapping of the foot begins with the toe of the boot raised as high as possible, from here the foot is lowered to the floor, and then carried back again.

This movement makes one whole beat, and is indicated on paper in this way: Down **V** up.

Half beats, then, are either **** or **/** according to position; and quarter beats are **\/**.

N.B.—The sections must follow the movement of the foot and go in this order $\begin{matrix}1.\backslash & /4.\\ 2.\backslash & /3.\end{matrix}$

An example will illustrate clearly.

Explanation.

Bar 1. A minim gets two whole beats, *connected to indicate one note.*

Bar 2. A whole beat for each crotchet.

Bar 3. A whole beat for the crotchet, and a half-beat for each quaver—*second beat split to indicate two notes.*

Bar 4. Quavers as in bar 3. Semiquavers each get a quarter beat, *all separate to indicate four notes.*

Bar 5. Quavers as before. Triplet of quavers indicated as two separate quavers with a 3 between them.

Bar 6. Note the upside-down effect of the crotchet, which takes the second half of the first beat and the first half of the second beat. Syncopation will always give some sort of displacement.

Bar 7. Dotted quavers and semiquavers (usually described by me as 9d. and 3d). The dotted quaver takes $\frac{3}{4}$ of the beat and the semiquaver the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$.

The exact position of each note is clearly indicated.

Bar 8. Dotted notes again and a triplet of quavers.

Bar 9. A whole beat and a rest of the value of a whole beat. The rest is indicated by a strike-out.

This system makes it possible to ckeck a player's time with nothing but the above indications before one.

When taking up a new piece it is best to *mark out all the beats in pencil*, then get an idea of "the hang of it" by tum-tumming, and finally play it over.

Begin with something really easy, and gradually work up to a broken-up fox-trot.

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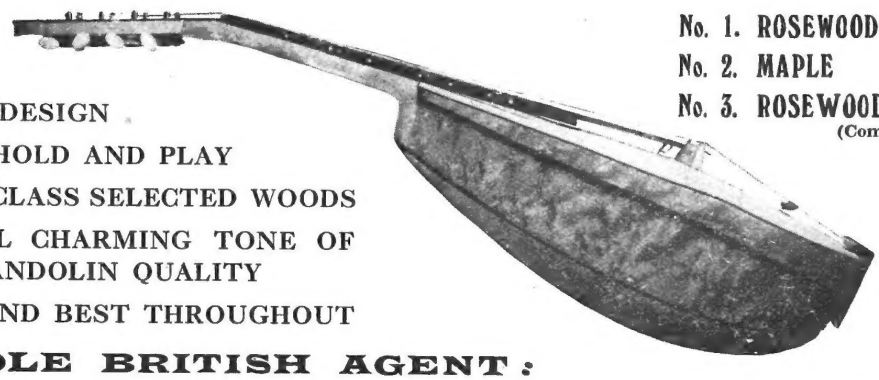

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MORE ABOUT THE PLECTRUM GUITAR—By Jimmie Green.

IN continuance of last month's article we will compare finger and plectrum methods of guitar playing, to decide which is the easier. Personally I am convinced in favour of the plectrum style.

Do you remember when you first tried the guitar, how your fingers seemed all thumbs? How those six strings seemed unaccountably multiplied to sixty? How, after striking with the thumb, first the fourth, then the sixth string in effort to find the fifth, you at last succeeded, only to find the three fingers of the right hand hopelessly out of position? Do you remember having to memorise those first few exercises, so that you could look at your right-hand? And that the third finger *would* not pull with equal strength, so that when a chord passage was played with the third finger taking the melody notes, the tune had to be strengthened with a large slice of imagination? Well, if you don't I do! These are some of the beginner's difficulties, which are considerably lessened by the use of the plectrum. Let's take each one in turn. "Fingers seem all thumbs." All getting in each other's way. The first finger striking a string which lawfully belongs to the second finger. The third refusing to strike anything, and waggling about in the air like a revolutionary flag. The thumb that wanders inside your fingers causing the teacher to say for the umpteenth time, "Put that thumb out." None of these things worry the plectrum player. He hasn't a family of plectrums to juggle with, but only one, to which he can give his undivided attention. He may need just as many attempts to find the fifth string, but in doing so he does not upset, or put his hand "hopelessly out of position." Also there is no having to spend weeks training fingers to pick out the different notes of a chord with the same force. The plectrum just glides over the strings, giving the same strength to every one. Just note the difference in the movements of the hand. It is quite easy to hold a plectrum between the finger and thumb. It stays in the same position, the only variation being a slight loosening or tightening of the grip. All the work is done by the wrist. Very well, then, we have only to train the wrist, that is, one set of muscles, to give us all we need. Now finger playing. Play a few notes and you will see two joints of the thumb and three of each of the three fingers working. Eleven in all! Think of it. In one method we use only one set of muscles and in the other eleven sets of muscles. In these days of labour-saving too! There is another thing; finger-playing composers are fond of open chords such as those using the first, third and fifth strings, or maybe the first, second and fourth. Well, these are suitable when finger-played. Even then they are not easy, and though they provide a change, are they worth such a lot? Open harmony at its best is only useful as a relief; the plectrist can get very near it by "splitting" a chord. That is, by playing a chord on the first three strings preceeded by a grace-note on the fifth string. No, the plectrum player does not lose much by not being able to play chords of open harmony. Lastly there is the crowning advantage of all; the absence of worry with regard to strings. The finger player uses gut for the first three strings. How often is he fortunate enough to get three that are in tune? Gut strings cannot be manufactured with a certainty of trueness, any more than a piece of wood can be guaranteed against warping, or a Derby tip a certain winner. No doubt there will be lucky patches, when the string will be faultless, but for how long? One of them will soon fray and cause sour notes. On the other hand, steel strings can be made true, and will last so for a comparatively long time. Here then is my summary:

1. One plectrum to manage with one wrist action to do it, as against three fingers and thumb, making eleven muscles to train.
2. Evenly balanced chords from the start, against usually bottom heavy ones.
3. Full range of P.P. to F.F. against only two expressions, "softly" and "more softly."
4. Strings always in tune, against strings in tune only on lucky days.

Notes on the Guitar—*continued from page 130.*

and three gut strings, which are made to vibrate by the action of the bare fingers.

Having now tried to make plain what we mean by a guitar, such as the great guitarists of to-day use, we hope to be in a position next month, to give some hints as to its technique. E.L.G.

N.B.—The attention of our readers is earnestly directed to the advertisement in this issue of a fine collection of classical music, excellently got up, and edited by the popular guitarist, Andrés Segovia.

Erratum.—The French quotation in last month's issue should read:—Revenons a nos moutons (4 words only, not 5, as given through an oversight).

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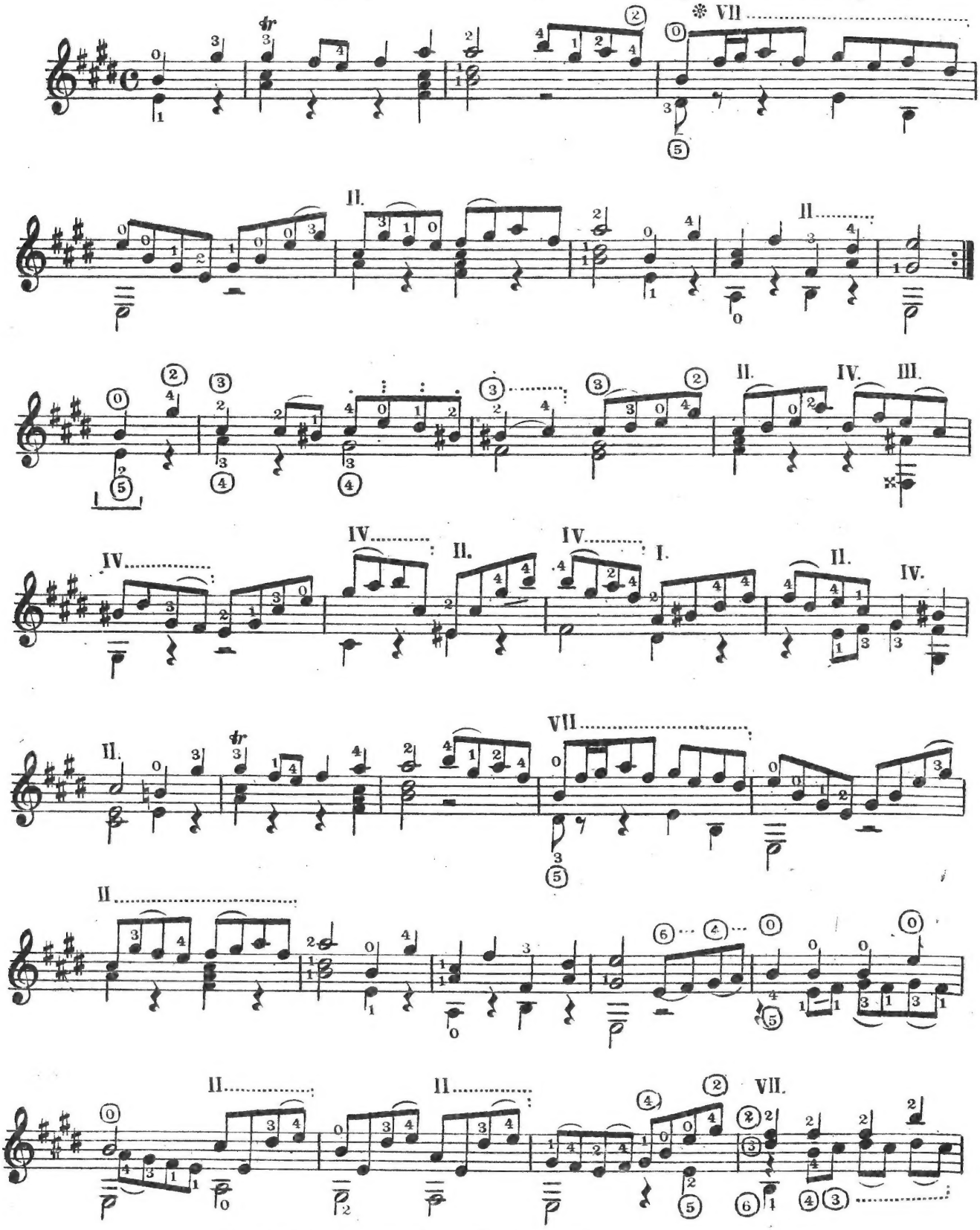
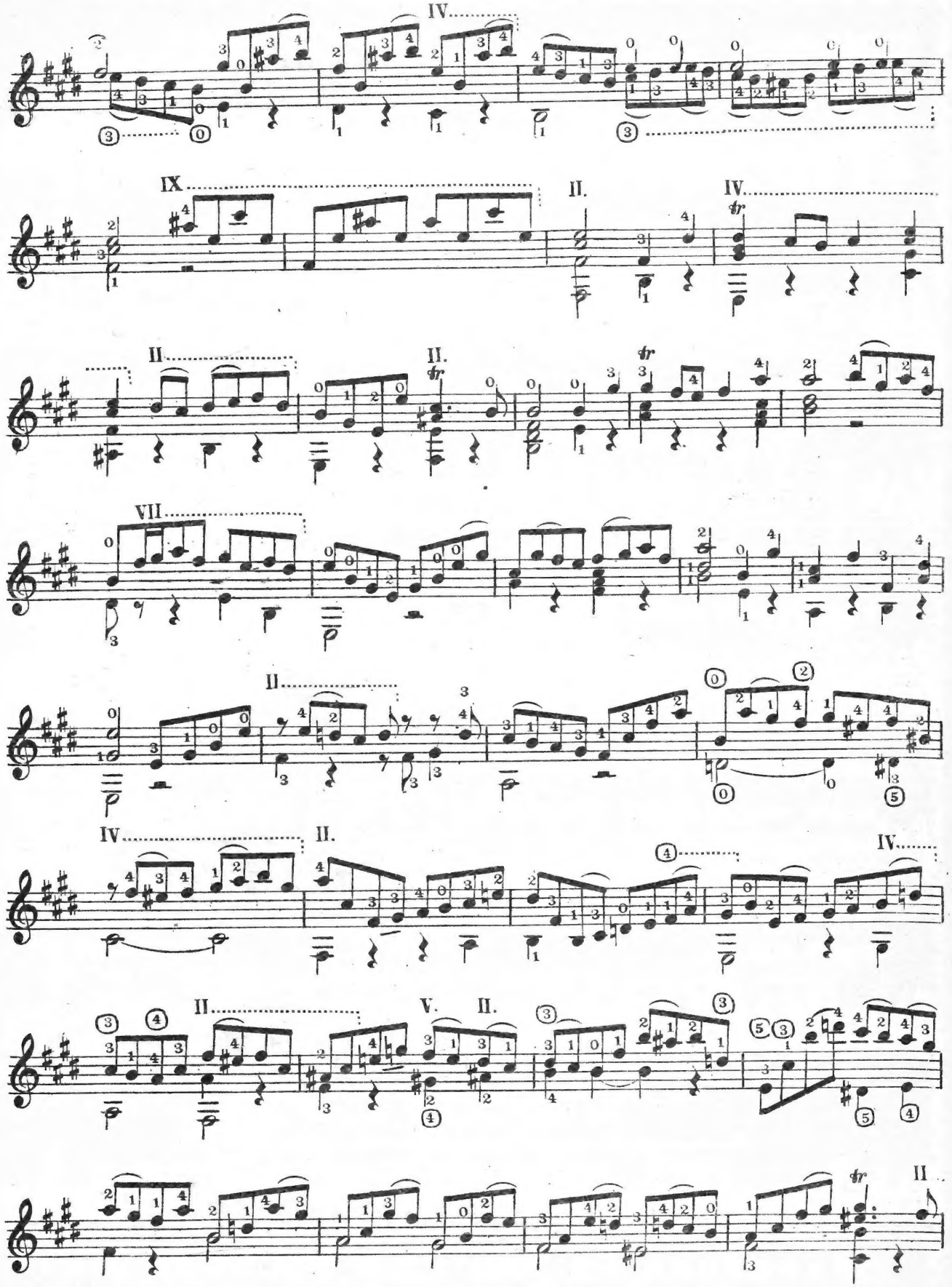
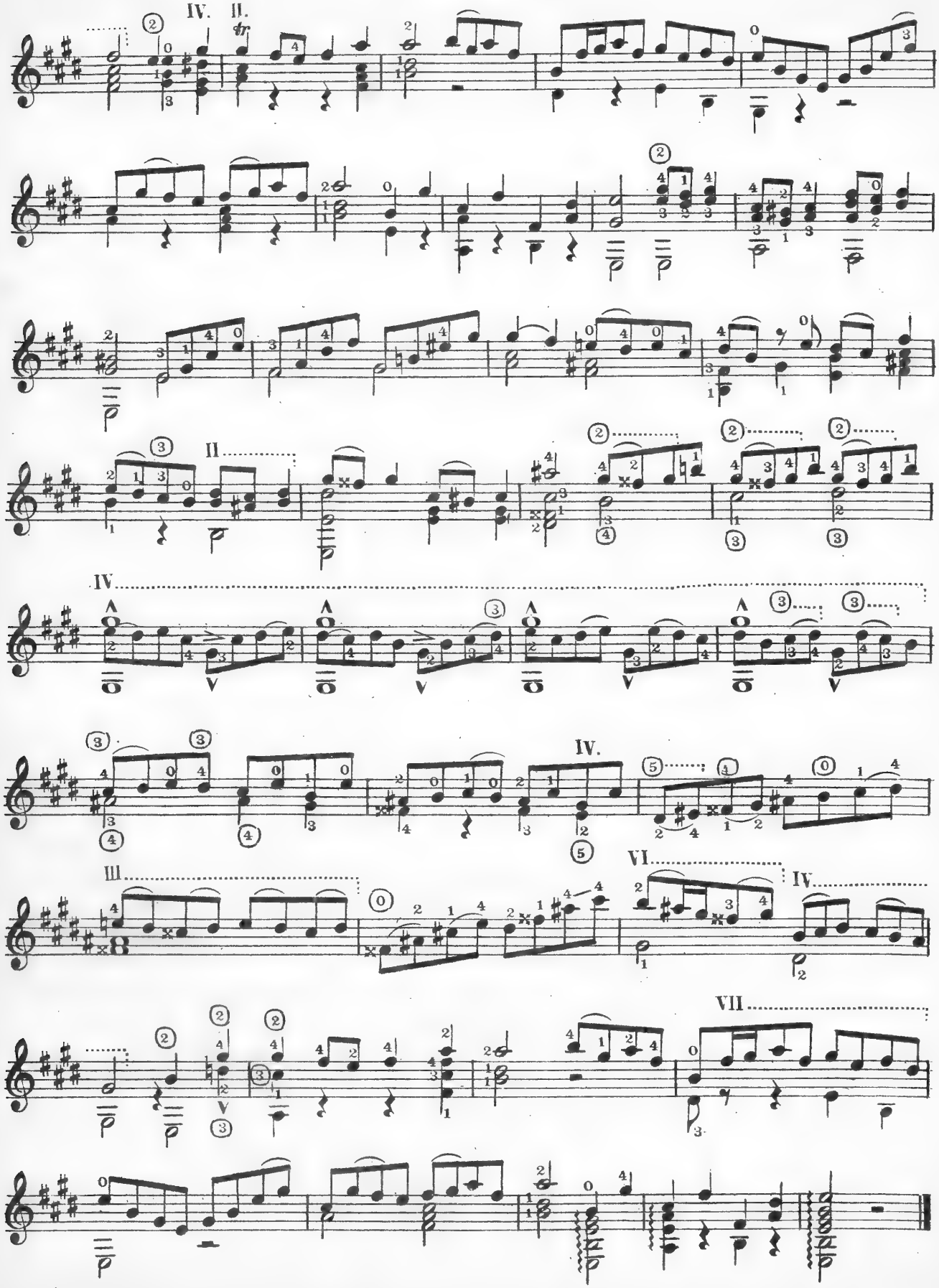
Gavotte.

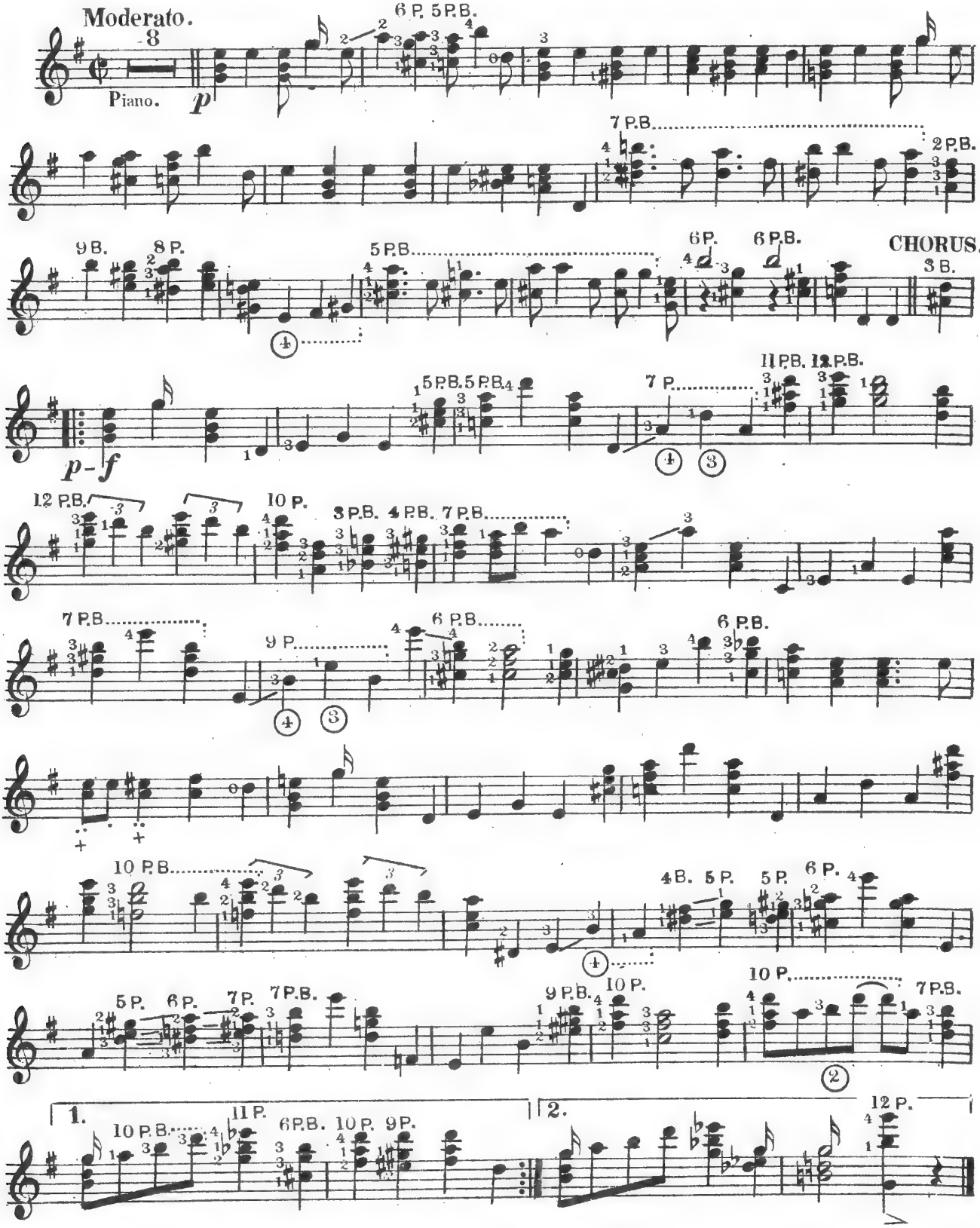
GUITAR SOLO.

J. S. BACH.
Transcription de Andrés Segovia.

By *kind permission of Messrs. B. Schott's. Söhne, Mainz.*

Sep. /29.

* The Roman figures show the position of the first finger, or Barré.

GUITAR SOLO.

Huggable Kissable You.

Arr. by BERNARD SHEAFF. BANJO SOLO. J. BIBO.

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Sep./29.

My Ideal.

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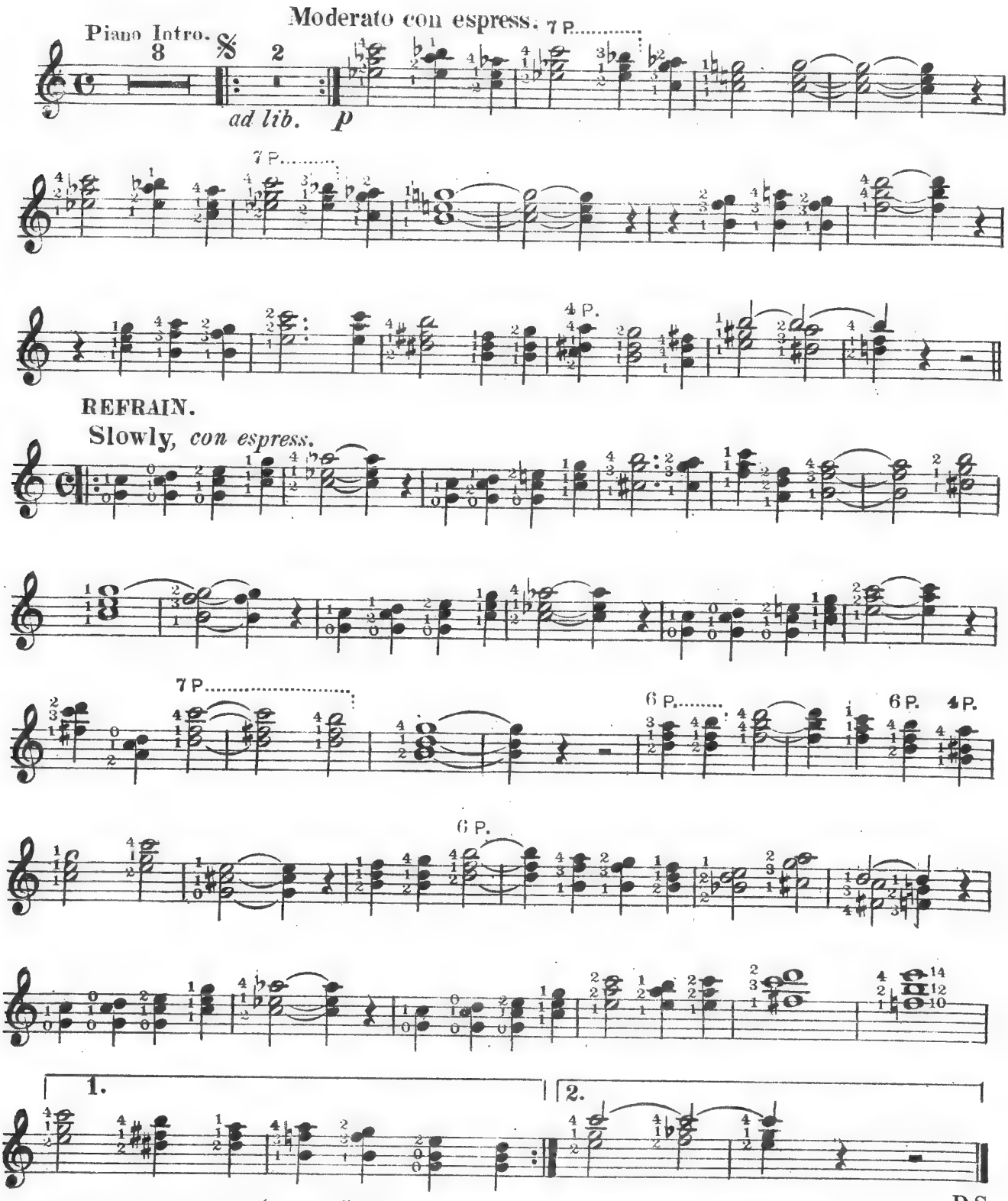
ERNEST TAYLOR.

PLECTRUM TREMOLO BANJO SOLO.

Music by
HORATIO NICHOLLS.

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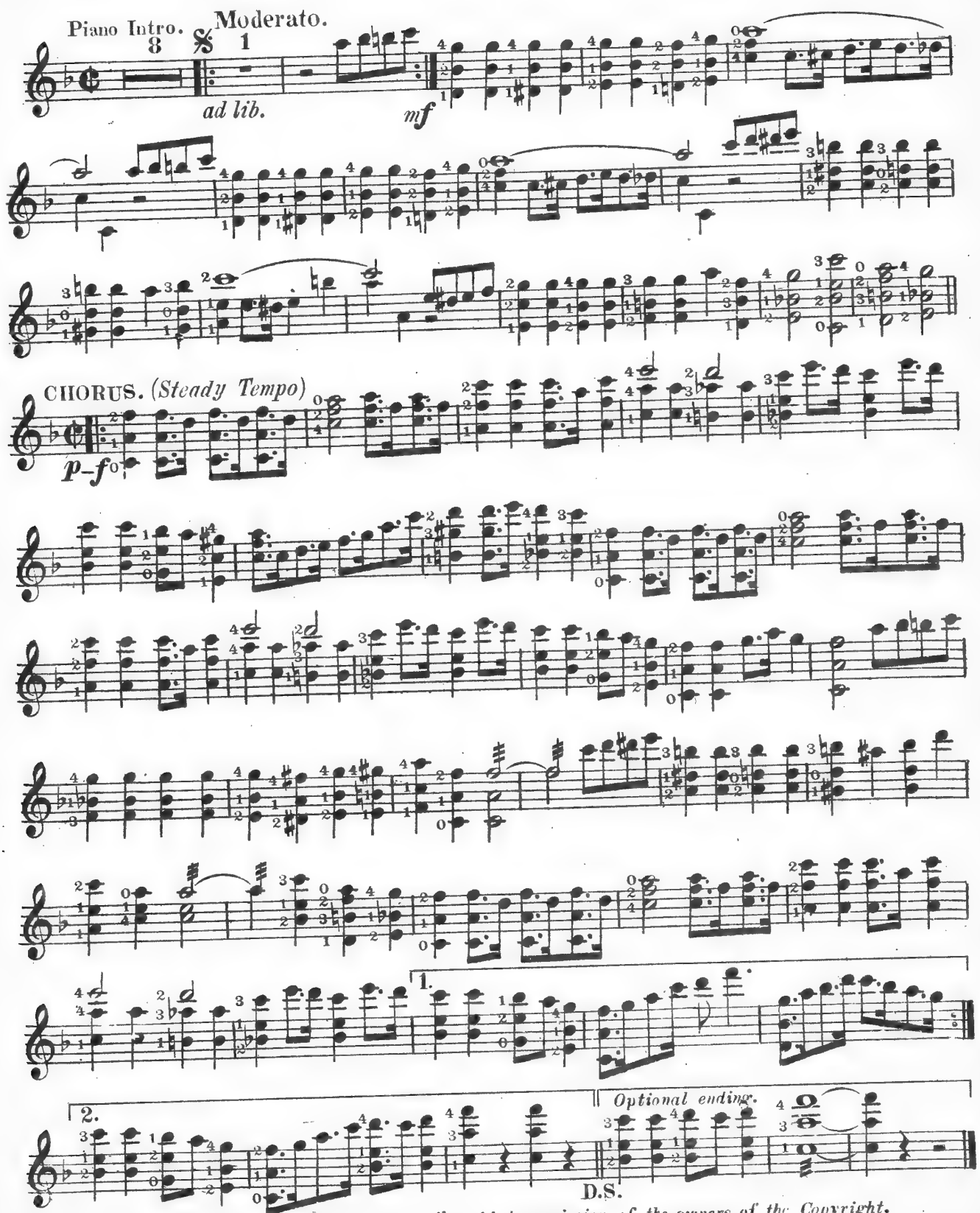
Sep./29.

The Hollow of a Hill.

TENOR BANJO SOLO.

Arr. by ERNEST TAYLOR.

by JAY PLONG.

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Sep./29. *The Lawrence Wright Music Co Denmark Street, Charing Cross Rd. W.C.2.*

B.M.G. MATTERS.

By. A. de Vekey.

AN extract — given below — from a letter received from a guitar player in the East, is interesting, apart from the quaint wording. It reads :—

"A guitar which sometime ago I bought from a friend here, for £12, and of which I was profoundably loveable, does much to annoy me now.

"The note I get most times at Bar No. 12 on the high string is not there, but it is nearly there at one bar up. The low strings also sound too high when stopped in like place. There are also sounds not of the string when plucked, but a tremble or humming somewhere, this also makes me cross."

The above has been answered separately through the post. The features complained of are common troubles on many guitars, and due to various causes—warped neck, machine buttons or other parts loose.

If the fretting is correct, the bridge and neck properly set, then the strings no doubt are false. The writer does not say whether he uses gut and silk, or steel and steel-covered strings. Probably "steel" for climatic reasons, though we get requests for gut and silk strings from the East.

Several points relating to the above were gone into in last month's KEYNOTES, so there is no need to go into it further at this writing. The extract from the letter shows how very important it is to possess an instrument free from these irritating features, for it is very easy to "fall out" with an instrument that fails to give satisfaction, and so lose the interest and enthusiasm once held.

Of course, many of these "minor ailments" can readily be rectified by reading the various technical articles, and applying the little hints and suggestions to one's own case, but there are occasions when it is best and cheapest in the end to place the instrument in the hands of an expert.

There is no doubt that the sphere of fretted instrument interest would soon widely extend if the use of better instruments becomes more general, which it is satisfactory to be able to say seems to be coming along, for there is no doubt that the passing up of many a one time enthusiast's interest may be traced to causes outlined in these notes.

PLECTRUM CHORD TREMOLO

THIS is a very beautiful effect which, if properly employed, never fails to command the admiration and respect of the attentive listener. It greatly increases the possibilities of the banjo or tenor banjo as a solo instrument, and when solos in this style are introduced into a player's repertoire they make a decided contrast to the usual staccato numbers.

In order to acquire an effective chord tremolo it is essential that the right wrist be arched so as to allow the hand to move very rapidly and quite freely. The plectrum should point straight down towards the vellum (instead of being held on an angle as is customary in the staccato style) and only the tip must be used to vibrate the strings, in order that the sound produced is very soft. This is a most important point, as a noisy tremolo gives a very bad effect. The plectrum must be held so that it always keeps in the same level when moving, and care must be taken that the hand does not travel too far either way, so that the plectrum when in action is at all times vibrating the required strings, and there is no waste of effort. To allow these two latter points to be dealt with accurately it is advisable to tense the muscles of the forearm slightly, not to stiffen the wrist, which at all times must be quite free, but so as to obtain complete control of the hand.

Try to avoid rattling the strings, but just rub them quickly with the tip of the plectrum in order to allow the notes of the chord to blend nicely one with another.

The fingers of the left hand must be trained to move neatly from one chord position to another, and should be kept on the fingerboard as much as possible, movement being made in a gliding manner.

If a very soft effect is required, a felt plectrum should be used.

A good solo for the banjo in this style is "Lullabye" (published by John Alvey Turner, price 2/-), the first part to be played tremolo.

Old melodies arranged by the writer for chord tremolo playing are to be found in back numbers of KEYNOTES as follows :—

"The Old Rustic Bridge by the Mill" and "Adeste Fideles," December, 1928 ; "Mary of Argyle," January, 1929 ; "Egypt," April, 1929.

There is a limited number of these copies still available.

Attention is also drawn to the arrangement of "My Ideal" in this issue, which illustrates the use of chord tremolo as applied to the more modern style of music.

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ON SOME COMMON ERRORS.

By BERNARD SHEAFF.

LAST month I commented on mistakes that are made in the working of the right hand, so in this article it is the left hand's turn to be similarly discussed.

The player should try to obtain a broad view of the part the left hand serves in banjo playing. The first fact to consider is that the right hand is responsible for producing the sounds in their proper order—that is, playing in correct time. This hand, in fact, is primarily the one that carries out the plan of interpretation. It directly controls and produces strict rhythm, perfect "swing," and expression so far as retarding and quickening the pace is concerned. It might be said, in comparison, that the left hand merely changes the pitch of the strings as required, and it is, in fact, the servant of the right.

It must therefore always be capable of exactly fulfilling the demands the right hand's plan of campaign may make upon it. If the right hand modifies what is known to be the correct speed and phrasing of a run, or makes any changes in its intended action just to accommodate a tardy left hand, the piece is spoiled. It should be as if the right hand decides the solo should sound in such and such a way, and the left hand *must* then work exactly in place according to that idea. One frequently hears a gap in what should be an even succession of notes because the right hand will politely wait until the left hand gets there. The right hand must be ruthless and force the other one to make good its defect.

The most common fault in the detailed working of the left hand is probably that of lifting the fingers too far away from the fingerboard, and this is generally coupled with the habit of releasing a stopped note or chord before it has had its due time to vibrate. In the most rapid passages the fingers should never leap in the air from the strings. The quicker the movement, in fact, the more the reason why the hand should move neatly and quietly from position to position, and the fingers press and release the strings with a very limited movement. This state of perfection is acquired by playing the simplest pieces with the utmost economy of energy and movement in the left hand, and the constant practice, slowly, of simple scales with attention concentrated on keeping the fingers down as long as possible, and unused fingers only just clear of the strings.

The throwing out of the wrist when making some of the position and position barre chords is, I consider, a bad fault, but lest it should be seen I am mounting a hobby-horse again, I will speak of this bending of the wrist as a disadvantage. This it undoubtedly is, for it is an impediment to the smooth working of the hand. In the first place, when the hand is bent at right angles to the forearm, the fingers are severely contracted, whereas with the back of the hand and the forearm in a straight line, the muscles are fully relaxed, and the maximum power over individual finger movement is obtainable. Secondly, the constant bending and unbending of the wrist to fit "stretches" tires the hand and impedes its smooth movement.

I will agree that there are players using the bent wrist who are good executants, but, I would suggest, in spite of the bent wrist rather than because of it. A bent wrist is not used by our greatest players—observe this at the next big banjo concert.

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Outstanding Banjo successes "Banjo Frolic," "Dimples," "Ad Astra," all by Joe Morley.

COMBINED PLAYING. By Kate Dolby.

THE whole family of fretted instruments might be divided into two classes—those with wood sound-boards, and those whose " sound-boards " are of skin or vellum.

In my own B. M. & G. Club experience the latter class of instruments largely predominate.

I do not quite see why. It is possible that many guitarists, mandolinists, etc., are under the impression that B. M. & G. clubs cater especially for the banjo class of instrument.

This is a big mistake. I can assure all our mandoline and guitar friends that we are anxiously waiting for them to " join up." I can also assure them that if they fail to do so, they are really missing something good.

A point I should like to impress is, that instruments of the wood soundboard type are perfectly charming for *combined* playing.

And this is a style of playing that our B. M. & G. clubs are doing their best to encourage.

Just to illustrate my remarks I may mention that my husband and I have just returned from our holidays at Bournemouth.

We, of course, called on our old friends, Mr and Mrs. de Vekey.

Mr. de Vekey very kindly arranged a musical " At Home, "and got together some of his " Serenaders " to give us some idea of their combined playing.

I have never passed a pleasanter afternoon than in listening to these very smart young performers.

Any one of them could " double " on several instruments, and their versatility was really wonderful.

In several of the pieces played the combination consisted of first and second mandoline, mandola, mandocello, guitar and long-scale uke.

Then, again, the steel guitars took the lead, with mandola, mandocello, guitar and uke parts combining to make " sweet music."

One number, in which a *voice* part was included, particularly pleased me.

Again, an unaccompanied solo on the mandoline given by one of the young ladies showed up the technical skill of the party.

And not the least, were the solos given by Mr. André de Vekey on his recently acquired vibraphone.

In fact, the whole combination revealed Mr. de Vekey as a very clever teacher, composer and organiser.

I came away crying—Where are the mandolinists and guitarists ?

Where ever they may be, I entreat them to join one of our many B. M. & G. clubs and to form such delightful combinations as the one I heard. Please don't waste any more time. Begin at once.

And a word to " uke-ists." Just call in J. Alvey Turner's place and try a long-scale uke. You will like it.

Volumn IV of Keynotes, from January to December, 1928 contains the following Banjo Solos, arranged finger style, in addition to Solos for the Guitar, Ukulele and Steel Guitar, etc., and articles of interest.

Ain't that a Grand and Glorious Feeling	**Tired Hands**
The Doll Dance	**C'est Vous**
I Ain't got Nobody	**Worrin'**
Where, O Where do I Live	**Bless her Little Heart**
Charmaine	**My Inspiration is You**
Nicolette	**Stay out of the South**

PRICE 7/- POST FREE.

TONE FOR THE PLECTRIST.

By Ernest Taylor.

THE subject of tone is one that is worthy of very serious consideration by every instrumentalist, and should be tackled very earnestly by the student of the banjo or tenor banjo who wishes to excel in the playing of his instrument.

Tone is the character of sound which emanates from the instrument being played and is governed partly by the instrument itself, and partly by the player.

From the point of view of the instrument, a little care will ensure that this will give of its best. The vellum of a banjo or tenor banjo must be kept tight (but not too tight), and the most suitable kind of strings and bridge used. A few experiments with various types of these latter accessories will amply repay the user of the instrument. So many useful articles on the subject of getting the most out of a fretted instrument have been written that it is hardly necessary to write more on this matter, except a reminder that the strings should be changed frequently, and not allowed to stay on until they become tonally worn out through stretching or being dented where they meet the frets.

From the player's point of view one of the most important things to remember is that quality, and not quantity, is what is required. The player who " punches " the strings of his instrument only succeeds in distorting the vibrations of the strings, and the tone produced (which to the player may seem very big) has a most unmusical effect, and moreover, will not carry well. The strings should never be punched : if the banjo will not give a clear, resonant tone without unnecessary force being used, then there must be something wrong somewhere, and the instrument should be carefully examined in order to find out what is required is order to obtain the maximum amount of tone from it.

To produce a clear tone from an instrument which in itself in good playing order it is necessary to cultivate a sharp, springing stroke of the plectrum. This will make the strings vibrate truly, and the clear sound produced will travel a long way. The plectrum should not be held against the strings before they are struck, as this produces a very poor quality of tone, the effect being that of a dull thud.

The plectrum must be held quite firmly, yet not stiffly, and must be controlled so that it does its work in a proper manner. Care in the choice of a plectrum is advisable, as what will suit one player will often be quite unsuitable for another.

Many players do not realise the importance of good left hand work in relation to tone production. To produce good tone the left hand fingers must press the strings immediately behind the frets. It will be quite apparent to the reader that the note required must sound from the vibrations of the exact length of the string from the fret to the bridge, consequently if the left hand finger is held so that it is away from the fret the vibrations will be carried over to the wrong side of it. The fingers should be kept on the fingerboard as much as possible, and in moving from one chord to another they should slide, rather than jump, into the required position.

The student must not be disappointed if his early efforts are not always so successful as he would wish. Disappointments are often met with by those who strive to excel, but if the subject of tone production is gone into with care, along with determination and perseverance, success is almost bound to be the reward.

Repairs to all Musical Instruments—at John Alvey Turner's.

DERBY AND DISTRICT B.M.G. CLUB.

AT the recent meeting of the Derby and District B.M.G. Club, held in the studio of Messrs. Edgar Horne & Co., Derby, the programme of musical items were as follows :—
Concerted items :—" The Possums Picnic," " Gold Diggers March " ; banjo duet, " Andante and Waltz," Miss D. Winfield, Mr. J. H. Ellis ; concerted items, " Stars are shining," " Tune Tonic " ; banjo quartet, " Pinxter Flower," " Rugby Parade," " Beat as you go," " Cicus Parade," Mrs. Dawson, Miss D. Winfield, Mr. E. Horobin, Mr. J. H. Ellis ; banjos and madolines, " Banjo Vamp " ; concerted items, " Tattoo," " Black Bess " ; mandolines, with ukulele accompaniment, " Shinaniki da," Misses N. M. Betteridge, H. Dawson, Mrs. E. Dawson. Miss E. Winfield acted as accompanist.

THE ILFORD BANJO CLUB.

THE nineteenth monthly meeting of this Club was held last evening at the Elite Dancing Academy High Road, Ilford, when we were honoured with the company of the President of the Leytonstone Banjo Club and friends.

The following is a resumé of the items rendered : " Bonnie Scotland," " Beat as you go," " Banjo Vamp," " Lancashire Clogs," " Tune Tonic," played ensemble ; " Wake up and Dream," banjo solo, Mr. Carr ; " Wedding of the Painted Doll," pianoforte solo, Mr. Will Kirby ; Kowalski's " Marche Hongroise," zither-banjo solo," Mr. W. M. Brewer ; " Odds and Ends " (W. M. Brewer), zither-banjo solo, Mr. W. M. Brewer ; " Kaleidoscope " (Edwards), zither-banjo solo, Mrs. Edwards ; " Plantation Echoes," zither-banjo solo, Master Simpson ; banjo solo, " A Banjo Oddity," Master Sproit ; " Tyro Mazurka," zither-banjo solo, Mr. Greenslade, Senior ; " Sugar and Spice," plectrum banjo solo, Mr. J. Edwards ; " My Ideal," plectrum banjo solo, Mr. L. Williams ; " Speedwell," banjo solo, Mr. Frank Greenslade. The solos " Sugar and Spice," played by Mr. Edwards, and " Odds and Ends," played by Mr. W. M. Brewer, were particularly appreciated by the company present. The next meeting will be held on the 9th of September.

BRISTOL B.M.G. CLUB.

MEETING, July 26th, 1929. An enjoyable meeting was held. The Club played " That's what I call Sweet Music " (T. Wendling), " All Alone in Lover's Lane " (H. Nicholls) ; " Blue Danube " (Parloetti) ; " Nigger Minstrels " (Grimshaw) ; " Club Mates March " (P. Troise). Banjo solos, " Indiana Echoes " (P. Hunter), " Butterfly " (Morley), Mr. Alf North ; banjo duet, " Sweet Meadow " (J. Wellfare), Messrs. Ball and Jenkins ; banjo solos, " Bunch of Keys " (Grimshaw), " Circus Parade " (Morley), Master W. Ball.

Further community playing followed. Next meeting, August 23rd ; all players welcome. Full particulars, Hon Secretary, Mr. Alf North, 42, Knowle Road, Bristol.

NORTH LONDON B.M.G. CLUB.

THE eleventh meeting of the North London B.M.G. Club was held on 22nd July. Owing, presumably, to holidays and warm weather, the attendance was rather below normal, but lack of numbers was made up by the enthusiasm of those present. The next meeting will be held on 23rd September.

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